



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Committee on the Rights of the Child Seventy-second session

Summary record of the 2106th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 17 May 2016, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Mezmur

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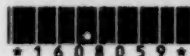
Combined second to fourth periodic reports of Samoa

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Consideration of reports of States parties

Combined second to fourth periodic reports of Samoa (CRC/C/WSM/2-4, CRC/C/WSM/Q/2-4)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Samoa took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Ms. Stowers-Ah Kau** (Samoa), introducing the combined second to fourth periodic reports of Samoa (CRC/C/WSM/2-4), said that Samoa had ratified the three optional protocols to the Convention. In 2013 it had established a national human rights institution that was empowered to receive complaints of violations of children's rights, which could in turn trigger a special enquiry under the Ombudsman Act. In 2015 the national human rights institution had published the country's first human rights report, which had explored the complementarity between the core values of *Fa'a Samoa*, or the Samoan Way, and the principles of the international human rights system. The section of the report devoted to children's rights formed the basis for the current review of the National Policy and Plan of Action for Children.
3. The Child Care and Protection Bill contained a legal framework for care and protection and incorporated the Convention in its entirety. The 2013 Family Safety Act provided for comprehensive protection of families, requiring courts to take prompt action on requests for protection orders. Victims could appoint representatives to apply for such orders on their behalf. Children who were found to be at risk could obtain alternative care.
4. Specialist courts — the Family Court, the Youth Court and the Alcohol and Drug Court — had been created to address the root causes of crime that impacted on community safety and well-being. The courts encouraged a therapeutic, preventive and pragmatic approach to those problems.
5. The 2016-2020 Samoa Development Strategy was aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. Priorities under the Strategy included health care and health promotion services, and efforts to understand and respond to vulnerable populations.
6. Samoa had achieved universal primary education thanks to a Government-administered school fee grant scheme that had replaced the fees parents had been obliged to pay in the past. Enrolment and retention rates had improved.
7. In July 2014, in response to concerns over the lack of hard data on child labour in Samoa, the Government had commissioned a rapid assessment of children working on the streets in Apia, with support from the International Labour Organization (ILO).
8. **Ms. Ayoubi Idrissi** (Country Rapporteur) said that the Committee welcomed all the measures taken by the State party to implement the Convention in the 10 years since the submission of its initial report. The Committee also welcomed its ratification of the optional protocols.
9. In light of the progress made in the area of primary education, she would like to know what now prevented the State party from withdrawing its reservation to article 28 (1) (a) of the Convention. As to legislation, she wondered whether the Child Care and Protection Bill had yet been passed and what the situation was in respect of the reform of the 2007 Young Offenders Act and the adoption of a list of hazardous jobs.
10. She would like more information about the bodies that supported the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development in its task of coordinating policies on children, namely the CRC Partnership Committee and the National Coordinating

Committee for the Convention on the Rights of the Child: what were their mandates, how were they coordinated and what was their budget allocation? She also wished to know: what lessons had been learned from the 2010-2015 National Policy and Plan of Action for Children; whether another such plan was in the pipeline; whether the Government had any plans to further increase the budget of the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development; what proportion of the funding for children's rights came from international cooperation; and what share of the national budget was devoted to children's rights.

11. Acknowledging the State party's efforts to improve data collection, she asked what further developments there had been in the Child Protection Information System. Acknowledging also the efforts made to disseminate the Convention, she said that more information was needed about how the Convention's provisions were brought to the attention of schoolchildren and their teachers, children with disabilities and those deprived of their liberty, and also to the attention of justice and law enforcement officials. She also wished to know what the Government was doing to engage with religious leaders and village chiefs who perceived children's rights as a challenge to parental authority. Noting that the protection component of the Convention appeared to receive most attention from the State party, she wondered whether all rights under the Convention were accorded the same importance.

12. Civil society being closely involved in work with children, she would like to know whether the State party provided any financial support for NGOs, particularly those working with victims of violence. She also asked what form private sector contributions to support health care, the environment and sport took, and how the private sector helped to prevent violence and combat the economic exploitation of children. As to the definition of the child, noting that various age limits continued to apply, depending on the legislation, she wondered whether the new care and protection legislation would introduce a single standard, not least in respect of the age of marriage, which was still different for boys and girls.

13. Despite the State party's efforts to improve birth registration, which was the basis for the protection of children's rights, still only 59 per cent of births were registered and birth certificates were issued in only 46 per cent of cases. What measures were envisaged to improve registration and had technical assistance been requested? With regard to the rights to freedom of expression, association, conscience and religion, the Committee would appreciate more detail on the channels through which children could exercise those rights.

14. The Committee appreciated the State party's efforts to end corporal punishment and violence against children in general, to combat sexual violence, including incest, and to break down the associated taboos. In that regard, she would like to know whether the ban on corporal punishment applied everywhere, including in the family and in disciplinary establishments for children in conflict with the law. She would also be interested to hear the Government's current position on the recent outbreak of violence among secondary school students, which had led to the closure of a school, given that, in that connection, the Government had mentioned a need to return to traditional methods of discipline, which might include corporal punishment.

15. She would appreciate information on efforts to raise children's awareness of sexual violence and how to protect themselves, and on training in how to detect sexual violence provided to those working with children. Were care protocols being standardized? What rehabilitation measures were in place, including when incest was involved, and were children used in prostitution considered victims or offenders? She further enquired whether children who brought complaints were protected from reprisal; whether the State party was considering extending the period of limitation applicable to sexual offences against children; and whether it had any plans to broaden the scope of the law on taking away or receiving a minor with intent to have sexual intercourse, in order to protect children until they reached

the age of 18 and not only those aged under 16 years old. Lastly, she asked what was being done to provide the Domestic Violence Unit with the resources it required to do its work, and whether there was a free hotline for children victims of violence.

16. **Mr. Guráñ** (Country Rapporteur) asked whether the national human rights institution was fully independent and who was responsible for appointing its head. There appeared to be no official with sole responsibility for the protection of children's rights, such as a children's ombudsman; the mandate of child welfare officers was much broader. He wondered whether the mechanism for lodging a complaint with the national human rights institution made specific allowance for complaints concerning violations of children's rights and, if so, how they were investigated.

17. The State party's current drive to amend its legislation in relevant areas was an opportunity to fully enunciate and implement all the principles of the Convention. Were there any plans to introduce special training for police officers, teachers and judges, for example, or regular training for other specialists? He wondered how article 12 of the Convention was implemented in practice: were there any school parliaments or community children's parliaments, for example? He would also like to know whether the Convention and the Committee's general comments Nos. 12 and 14 had been translated into Samoan.

18. **Mr. Nogueira Neto** asked whether the Government of Samoa could take more effective measures to end all forms of discrimination against children, in particular children with disabilities and including discrimination by means of customary practices, and with particular reference to girls' access to the position of chief of village council.

19. **Ms. Khazova** said that, according to information received, grandparents had been known to register children born out of wedlock as their own in order to avoid stigmatization of the children and their unmarried mothers. She would like to know if that information was correct. Were such children able to know the truth and establish a relationship with their parents in the future, and did the State party intend to raise awareness of the problems they faced?

20. **Ms. Oviedo Fierro** said that, with regard to the right to freedom of expression, she would like to know how the National Youth Council worked and what it had achieved, what age its members were and how they were selected. She wondered how the results of the recent survey into children's use of the Internet were being applied.

The meeting was suspended at 3.40 p.m. and resumed at 4 p.m.

21. **Ms. Onesemo-Tuilaepa** (Samoa) said that her Government was keen to remove its reservation to article 28 (1) (a) of the Convention but that it first wished to see whether the school fee grant scheme was sustainable under the new financing arrangements. Previously the scheme had been funded from development assistance; the Government had taken over as the sole source of finance relatively recently and would need two or three years to test the scheme's sustainability.

22. The main objective of the Child Care and Protection Bill was to incorporate the Convention into domestic law and harmonize the various disparate pieces of legislation. In order to do that, the Government had decided to undertake a complete policy review. The National Coordinating Committee on the Convention on the Rights of the Child was mandated by the Cabinet and brought together all stakeholders and partners such as government agencies, NGOs and the private sector, as well as community representatives. The coordination and implementation mechanisms were being reviewed to ensure that they were sufficiently resourced and were structured so as to be able to operate properly.

23. The head of the national human rights institution was appointed by the Cabinet, on the basis of merit, in the same way as the heads of other independent State bodies. There was no special children's ombudsman, but the Ombudsman could receive complaints from

children. If a specialist was found to be needed, that possibility would be given due consideration but resources were an issue and, in a population of only 180,000, there was no pool of specialists to draw on. The purpose of the current review of mechanisms was to ensure that high-level priorities were addressed and that structures were in place that served to meet those objectives effectively. As to further increasing the budget of the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development, it was a matter of convincing the Government to make that a priority. The bulk of the national budget went to health and education.

24. The Government of Samoa faced challenges in terms of the integration of data and systematic capture of relevant indicators. It was assessing measures taken on children's behalf over the past five years to identify what had worked best. As part of that exercise, it was reviewing the data-collection system and the resources needed to deliver results.

25. Equal weight was given to all articles of the Convention. With regard to dissemination, the national human rights institution conducted awareness-raising campaigns in schools and communities. The main organizations of persons with disabilities also publicized relevant articles of the Convention. In improving outcomes for children, it was critical to get religious and cultural leaders on board. It was important to tackle attitudes and behaviours that claimed to be based on biblical teachings, in order to encourage acceptance of the principles of the Convention. Much work was being done to help cultural leaders understand those principles and see that they complemented cultural values, the aim being to equip them to take a lead in child protection within their communities.

26. The Government worked closely with NGOs to support children who were the victims of crimes. The Government gave NGOs a certain amount of support but more resources were badly needed. The real key to care and protection, including alternative care, was the strong family orientation within Samoan culture. It was certainly true that, in exceptional circumstances, families were not the best providers of care, but alternative care could also be provided by NGOs or within the new system to be set up under the new legislation. Cooperation with the private sector was still in its infancy. The Government had commissioned research, such as a family safety study being conducted with Australian support, to obtain data about the root causes of child labour and child exploitation, and the 2013 Child Protection Baseline Report was proving useful in determining which strategies to adopt. The new legislation on child care and protection would harmonize all the relevant age ranges, including marriageable age.

27. Low birth registration was explained in part by parents' tendency to register children only once they reached school age. The challenges were being tackled through ongoing use of the network of women representatives in the villages and the formal health-care system to support parents in the registration process. The Samoa Bureau of Statistics also ran awareness-raising campaigns. She had not come across the problem of grandparents registering children born out of wedlock, but would look into it. Children were entitled to a sense of identity and it was important to remove the stigma attached to unmarried mothers.

28. Every village had a representative on the National Youth Council; their ages ranged from 15 to 35 years old. The Council was independent and had its own system of governance. It was relatively new but was gradually becoming the voice of youth. Work on freedom of association and expression for children was generally ongoing but was limited by capacity constraints: the Ministry was responsible for gender equity, child protection, youth empowerment and good local governance, among other areas, yet had a staff of only 100 and the limited budget mentioned previously. It was trying to work systematically through the issues in order of priority.

29. The recent incidents at a secondary school had brought the question of violence to the fore of the national consciousness. The school had reopened and information was being

gathered to ensure that strategies for the future were evidence-based. The key would lie in primary prevention and religious and cultural leaders would have an important role in dismantling myths and mindsets that hailed the efficacy of corporal punishment for children — an estimated 79 per cent of the population believed that such methods actually worked — and building a system that could provide an adequate response and included, when things went wrong, rehabilitation and reintegration support. All those issues would be addressed in the 2016-2020 Community Sector Plan and the new National Policy and National Plan of Action for Children. Resources and funding for education and awareness had been obtained from Australia and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). As to sexual violence, NGOs, the Government and the national human rights institution were making efforts to raise awareness. Cooperation with village representatives would ensure an effective response, not only with regard to reporting but also in terms of support for those seeking justice.

30. The Child Care and Protection Bill was scheduled for adoption by December 2016. The quality assurance framework for the care of children envisaged under the Bill would ensure that care standards were harmonized and monitored. The Bill referred to the best interests of the child, unlike the current legislation, and would address the question of child prostitution, ensuring that children involved in prostitution were considered to be victims. Much work was being done to raise children's awareness of safety issues — by NGOs, the Samoa Victim Support Group and various ministries — in schools, in villages and through the traditional community network. The statute of limitations for crimes against children and legal protection for minors under 18 years of age would be reviewed in the context of the next National Policy and National Plan of Action for Children. NGOs had set up helplines through which violations could be reported and, as demand increased, service providers were also beginning to introduce such facilities.

31. Training was carried out by NGOs and government departments working collaboratively. Members of the judiciary had taken a notable lead by conducting their own training, with the help of international colleagues. As to participation by children, the National Youth Council still needed support as capacity was a problem. Indeed, capacity was a problem in general and the Government was not able to do everything at once; it asked the Committee to be patient as it worked through each of the areas and set up the structures needed.

32. The Convention had been translated and attempts were being made to use contemporary media for dissemination. However, the majority of village dwellers needed culturally appropriate delivery. Some methods simply did not work and it was necessary to search for what was acceptable.

33. Programmes to disseminate appropriate information about the Internet were still rudimentary, though efforts were being made to harness its benefits and minimize harm. With regard to discrimination against children with disabilities, enormous changes had taken place in the past 10 years in terms of recognizing the rights and contributions of persons with disabilities. There were still challenges, including in access to services, but the Government was working towards ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the establishment of a legal framework.

34. **Ms. Khazova** said that she would like to know whether a child whose birth had not been registered was able to attend school, given that registration was apparently a prerequisite for enrolment in education. She would like to know how many children were born to unmarried parents and how many of those children were unregistered. For those that were registered, were they registered in the mother's name only or could the father's name also be added to the registration documentation?

35. **Mr. Guráň** said that the Committee did not expect small countries such as Samoa to set up new, specialized institutions specifically tasked with promoting and protecting the rights of children. What it was asking was that the State party train the existing staff of existing institutions to specialize in that field. It was particularly important to designate a single official to assume responsibility for children's rights at the national level, to serve as a point of liaison for NGOs and to address reported violations. In that respect, the Committee would appreciate information on complaints received about violations of the Convention and the rights of children more generally.

36. **Ms. Sandberg** said the Committee acknowledged that the State party clearly had the motivation to develop its activities in the field of children's rights despite its limited financial and human resources. However, doing so would require an increase in the budget allocated to such activities. She asked what type of recommendations the State party would find it useful to receive in the concluding observations. On the topic of corporal punishment, she asked whether teachers and parents were educated in the use of alternatives to violence as a means of disciplining children.

37. **Ms. Ayoubi Idrissi** said that she would like to know more about interaction and coordination between the National Coordinating Committee for the Convention on the Rights of the Child National Coordinating Committee, the CRC Partnership Committee and the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development. Given its predominantly advisory role, she wondered whether the National Coordinating Committee contributed to implementation and follow-up activities and if so, how. Since support services for child victims of abuse appeared to be provided almost exclusively by civil society organizations, she would appreciate information about any State-run institutions that also provided assistance and support of that kind.

38. **Ms. Onesemo-Tuilapea** (Samoa) said that children were required to have a birth certificate in order to enrol in school and that funding for the primary education grant system was linked to birth registration. However, that principle was a policy rather than a law and was not used to deny children access to education: the Government's priority was to ensure that children attended school. No data on the number of children born to unmarried mothers were currently available: the Government acknowledged the need to upgrade and improve its data-collection systems in order to ensure the future availability of such data.

39. It was indeed essential to provide Government employees with training in children's rights and to encourage them to develop specialist knowledge. The national human rights institution was currently engaged in capacity-building activities to that end and was working to achieve compliance with the Paris Principles. The Government welcomed all international support for its work to protect the rights of the child and looked forward to receiving the Committee's concluding observations and recommendations, whichever areas it deemed to require the most urgent attention.

40. Programmes that promoted alternative, non-violent methods of disciplining children were in place in Samoa and, with support from the Government of Australia and UNICEF, the policy development and planning work necessary to develop a dedicated action plan for the prevention of corporal punishment was well advanced.

41. The National Coordinating Committee was responsible for overseeing implementation of the Convention, the Committee's recommendations and child policy in general. It also provided policy advice to the relevant Government ministry, which in turn provided advice to the Cabinet.

42. Much of the awareness-raising and service provision work that had previously been carried out directly by the Government was now performed by NGOs; their proximity to the community made them better placed to undertake such activities and the Government

was thus freer to focus on essential policy development and resource planning work, including, in particular, the development of the child care protection system due to be established in implementation of the Child Care and Protection Bill.

43. It was possible for one parent to register a child's birth but, in such cases, the parent was required to sign a statutory declaration explaining why the other parent was absent. The absent parent's name could be added to the birth certificate at a later date if desired.

44. **Ms. Stowers-Ah Kau** (Samoa) said that the delegation was grateful for the Committee's comments and questions and welcomed its support. The Government would strive to apply the lessons learned from the periodic reporting process. It was making a considerable effort to tackle the particular challenges associated with the practice of corporal punishment — an issue that attracted a great deal of media attention — and had responded promptly to the unfortunate incidents of violence by allocating more resources to the problem.

45. **Mr. Gurāñ** said that there appeared to be a contradiction in Samoan society: while on the one hand the family was treated with great reverence and respect, on the other domestic violence was a serious problem. The Committee would appreciate more information on the obstacles to a ban on corporal punishment, so that it was better equipped to formulate recommendations that would support the State party in eliminating the practice. More detail about the Government's plans to introduce alternative care systems for children who could not be with their biological parents would be useful, as would information about how the new care and protection system would be monitored and organized.

46. On the issue of adoption, he would like to know why the vast majority of Samoan children were placed with adoptive families overseas, especially in New Zealand and Australia, while only 10 per cent remained in Samoa, and whether the State party would consider ratifying the Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption of 1993 in the near future.

47. Since the lack of free health care created problems for many people, especially poorer families, he would like to know whether the Government was exploring possible ways to resolve that situation, perhaps by eliminating charges for children. As the geography of Samoa often made it difficult for persons to travel to health-care facilities, a possible solution could be a mobile hospital. He wondered whether the State party had considered that possibility.

48. Although breastfeeding for the first six months of a child's life was becoming more commonplace in Samoa, concerns had been raised about working mothers finding it difficult to reconcile their professional and family lives because parental leave was granted for a period of three months only. Programmes that enabled mothers to continue breastfeeding once they returned to work were therefore essential, as were measures to prohibit or limit the promotion of infant formula in the media.

49. Noting that the teenage pregnancy rate was rising and there appeared to be a lack of information and awareness on sexual health issues, he asked what action was being taken to address the deficiencies in that area. With the suicide rate among young people also reported to be rising, information about any measures being put in place to tackle that problem would likewise be appreciated. Noting that abortion was prohibited in the State party, he asked whether pregnancies could be terminated in cases of rape and what the Government's position was in such situations.

50. **Ms. Ayoubi Idrissi** said that the high school dropout rate was a serious concern. The Committee would appreciate more information about the implementation of the 2009 Education Act and the consequences for parents whose children were not in education. Although education was nominally free, there were hidden fees that dissuaded parents from

sending their children to school. For that reason, she would like to know what steps had been taken to improve access to education at all levels, and especially at the early childhood and secondary levels, and what was being done to eliminate the hidden fees and reduce dropout rates.

51. She would also like to know whether human rights education was included in the curricula; how the Convention was taught to children; whether all children, including those with disabilities and those in detention, were given the opportunity to participate in leisure and culture activities; what was being done to combat the commercial exploitation of children by parents, particularly by sending children out to sell goods on the streets; whether the State party had adopted, or was considering adopting, measures to protect children who lived and worked on the streets; and what progress had been made towards the adoption of a list of hazardous work that children were not permitted to perform. It was particularly important for the State party to follow up on the Committee's previous recommendations on the subject of child labour, after its recent ratification of the optional protocols to the Convention.

52. The Committee would appreciate further information about progress towards the reform of the 2007 Young Offenders Act and the possibility of changing the age of criminal responsibility from over 17 years of age to over 18 years of age. Further information on the detention conditions of young offenders, including the educational and training opportunities available to them, would be welcomed. The Committee also wished to know whether juvenile offenders were detained separately from adults.

53. **Mr. Cardona Llorens** said that, although direct discrimination against children with disabilities was prohibited in the State party, such children still faced social stigmatization, difficulties in accessing health-care and other services, and indirect costs in education. Since the State party had signed, but not yet ratified, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, he wondered what the obstacles to ratification were. On the subject of inclusive education, he would appreciate further information on the measures taken to train teachers and promote inclusiveness for children with mental or psychosocial disabilities.

54. Given that the geography of the State party made it susceptible to natural disasters, he would like to know what programmes had been developed to protect children with disabilities in the event of a natural disaster. Information about the policies in place to support families and prevent children from being abandoned by their families would be useful, as would information about access to sanitation for children living in rural areas and the action being taken to remedy deficiencies in that area.

55. **Ms. Khazova** said that the State party's strategy for mental health seemed to be dependent on community-based services provided by NGOs. It was important to ensure that children had access to mental health hospitals and centres when required, and that they were referred to such facilities when appropriate. Work to prevent children with mental health problems from becoming overreliant on medication was also needed.

56. **Ms. Aho Assouma** said that the information provided on the prevention of alcohol and drug abuse gave her the impression that, although the State party had good intentions, it was having problems with policy implementation. She would like to know what concrete steps were being taken to help young people dealing with substance addiction; whether specialized, trained staff were available to help them; whether the Goshen Trust provided mental health services for children separately from adults, or with all ages grouped together; how the Government dealt with victims of sexual abuse; what specialized facilities were available for the treatment and care of such persons; and whether a specific plan was in place to protect young persons in the event of a natural disaster. She would also like more

information on access to health care in rural areas, including information on measures to prevent mother-to-child HIV transmission.

57. **Mr. Rodríguez Reyes** said that, with suicide still a serious concern in the State party, the Committee would appreciate up-to-date data on suicide rates among young people and more information on the services available to adolescents suffering from depression and possibly contemplating suicide. Did any State-run health-care facilities provide services of that kind? Information about the impact of the 2011-2016 National HIV and AIDS Policy and data on the prevalence of HIV and AIDS would be appreciated.

58. **Ms. Aldoseri**, noting that a great deal of effort appeared to have been devoted to reducing child poverty and raising the standard of living, asked what challenges had been encountered in those areas, including, in particular, in creating more and better economic opportunities. She also sought an update on the financial support allocated to low-income families and the outcome of the 2011-2015 Community Sector Plan.

59. **Mr. Nogueira Neto** said that the Committee was impressed by the progress made by the State party in protecting the rights of the child given the constraints it faced. The Government might, however, look at ways to improve the support available for children in migration situations and better guarantee their rights, notably by implementing the various relevant instruments to which the State was a party, including the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, and transposing their provisions into domestic legislation.

60. **Mr. Kotrane** said that the Committee shared the concerns raised previously by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women about the State party's delays in establishing a family court. It was important that judges were trained in the rights of the child and in related fields such as divorce. The Committee noted that the State party had ratified the International Labour Organization (ILO) Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) and the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and urged it to also consider ratifying the ILO Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81). Lastly, he would like to know whether children in conflict with the law could be held in pretrial detention for the same length of time as adults; if not, for how long, at most, they could be held; and what was the maximum sentence they might face, if convicted.

61. **Ms. Winter** said that the Committee was pleased with the progress made by the State party in enacting legislation on juvenile justice. However, the difficulty lay in implementing that legislation. In that connection, the Committee would like to know whether legal professionals, judges and police officers had received training in alternatives to detention and punishment for children. Noting that insufficient statistical data was available on the offences committed by children and the reasons for their pretrial detention or imprisonment, she said that the Committee needed information about the length of pretrial detention, investigations undertaken and the status of pending cases. More information on access to health services and sanitation in detention facilities would likewise be appreciated. She also wished to know whether juvenile detainees were housed separately from adults and prison staff. Lastly, since child witnesses and victims did not benefit from legal protection when taking part in legal proceedings, she asked what was being done to guarantee the protection they required.

62. **Ms. Sandberg** said that the State party's report referred to low levels of participation in early childhood education but indicated that efforts would be made to increase that rate in the future. Since two years had passed since the report's submission, an update on developments in that area would be helpful. If progress had been limited, what were the obstacles the State party faced?

63. **The Chair** said that, in paragraph 18 of its replies to the list of issues (CRC/C/WSM/Q/2-4/Add.1), the State party indicated that sexual activity "for gain or reward" was criminalized under the 2013 Crimes Act. The Committee would appreciate an explanation of the meaning of "for gain or reward" and of the application of those provisions to cases involving children. In the same paragraph, the State party stated that, while the offence of rape was gender specific, the 2013 Crimes Act also provided for the non-gender specific offence of sexual connection. Could the delegation clarify the meaning of that sentence also? With regard to the 2013 Family Safety Act, he would like to know how children placed in State care were looked after and where they were housed.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.